



## **College of Textiles - October 2009 Update**

**Written by Philip Dail, Director of Advising and Admissions**

This update contains a lot of valuable information including what we are hearing from them about issues they are facing, where they are academically, a reminder about tutoring and how easily available it is, comments about GPAs and policies from NCSU about grade management, suspension information, and finally what we are doing to help students who are considering leaving Textiles..

We encourage you to read this before they leave for fall break. If you have questions, email your student's adviser.

### **They're Coming Home Again...soon...maybe**

We assume most of your students are coming home for fall break. Some of them are going to be extremely tired as you are probably hearing. We've dealt with illnesses and are aware some of you have had to take a student home. Hopefully this will abate some, but the word from our Health Center is to be prepared for more.

We're hearing about issues they are experiencing which we want to bring to your attention. Some of them are saying they want parents to trust them more and reduce their input into their decision making about what they are doing now. We know this is so hard on you, as it is on them. Some of them undoubtedly have provided reasons for being concerned. At the same time, this is perhaps one of the hardest times in the life of the parent-child relationship. How does a parent let a child go enough so the child can move along in becoming an adult? Yet sometimes the child still acts like the child and not the developing young adult. This is when all of us must try to allow them to have the room to make the same mistakes we made at their age. No perfect guidelines for success in this transition exist. Try to talk to them and be honest about your concerns. Finally, you may need to take a step back and let them try their wings out more. It's hard on them as well since they really don't want to disappoint you for the large part. The main thing to remember is to be honest with them and as calm as possible. I tell them to never try to resolve an issue when they are angry about that issue.

Overall relationships are a major source of concern for many of them. This includes friends at home, relationships with significant others, family issues, long distance relationships, etc. One big area of concern for some is roommate issues. While this does not help an individual student to hear, this happens more than it should, and yes it is unfortunate. We are encouraging them to deal with this straightforwardly and involve their Resident Advisers if necessary. Roommate contracts stating expectations that are signed by both roommates are good. Then these should be posted for both to see all the time. This can even be done in a suite if the need arises.

### **What is their academic situation right now?**

To be totally honest, some of them have been in academic shock for a period of time and are just beginning to come out of it. Some have made grades lower than they've ever seen before. Some of it was their fault, but in all honesty, we still cannot decide on anything to do to really prepare them for their first round of college tests. Over and over upper class students say it's just something a student has to go through. We have talked about time management, study skills, note taking, and other related topics in T101. Our Counseling Center offers excellent workshops on topics like these. Check Workshops/Outreach at this site [http://www.ncsu.edu/student\\_affairs/counseling\\_center/](http://www.ncsu.edu/student_affairs/counseling_center/).

In the majority of the classes they are taking, the instructors have provisions for dropping the lowest test grade or replacing that grade with the final exam grade. In some cases this provision is based on the student not missing over a certain number of days. A good number of classes include attendance in the grade. We do this in T 101. So we all recognize that new students will frequently be devastated by at least the first test grade.

We are monitoring their stress levels and are checking to see how they are doing on their tests and papers. As you can appreciate, we depend on their honesty in this self reporting.

### **What's Happening Right Now?**

We are working with them about advising for registering for the Spring 2009 semester. If your student is remaining in a textile degree, they have turned in the classes they are planning to take for the spring. We personally checked every student's plan and made comments as needed. They do a Plan of Work on line which is required by NCSU.

### **College of Textiles Free Walk-In Tutorial Service**

We have repeatedly recommended and stressed coming to T 101 prepared to use this excellent service. We are hearing extremely favorable comments about the tutors and we ask that you take a look at this site <http://www.tx.ncsu.edu/academic/advising/tutoring.html> to see what we offer. We are hoping to add another tutor soon.

Once more, we arranged the T 101 classes so that tutors were available either before T 101 starts or after they are finished. In the case of some sections, the students can go to tutoring before and after T 101. Once again, they need to come to T 101 prepared to go with what is needed for the class for which they need help.

### **ABOUT GPAs....**

You may not see the GPAs you think you should see. We remind you that a 2.0 is good enough to graduate a student from college, but at the same time it is not considered very positively. We know the fact that high schools created weighted courses so students now come to us with 5.0 and higher GPAs has contributed to something that needs to be addressed now.

A "C" is average as you well know. Being average in a college course is not the worst thing to be. However, many students are under so much pressure, either perceived by them or real and placed on them by parents and others, until they consider themselves failures if they make a C. We don't encourage students to aim for a C in a course, but the reality is that sometimes this is an accomplishment rather than a failure. I absolutely will never forget one of the most rewarding grades I ever received was a C in a US History class in 1967. I danced down the hall when I saw the grade posted.

We also realize you have a perspective of your student we do not....years of it. But we also have a view of them you do not. Working with this age group for now 35 years has provided some insights that I use as constructively as possible. Here is one insight I want to share and ask you to consider.

As long as a student has a solid 2.75 or higher GPA and a good resume of experiences while in college, they will be fine. Sure, a higher GPA is better as far as opening some doors. Yes, graduate schools require a 3.0 or higher in most all cases. We definitely know that stellar GPAs with a marginal record of involvement and work experience also hurt a student.

So we encourage you to look at this first semester GPA and know full well that it will be easy to repair if it is low. No, we don't want a student to have a low GPA, but it is not the end of their academic life at NCSU. Please read the part of this newsletter about grade management carefully.

### **Grade Management Policies - Important Academic Information**

NCSU has policies in effect to help new students make the transition and deal with poor grades if necessary.

#### **1. First Year Repeat Policy**

If a student makes a D+ or lower in a course, they may use this policy. This policy can be applied to only 2 courses at the 100 or 200-level only taken any time during the student's first calendar year at NCSU. The student can repeat the course, and the grade they receive the second time replaces the first grade, even if the second grade is lower which does happen. The first grade is removed from their GPA but the actual letter grade remains on their transcript with a "R" beside it. The course must be repeated at NCSU. In the future, graduate and professional schools may recalculate the GPA and include the first grade if they are so inclined. Some definitely do. We have explained this policy thoroughly in T 101.

#### **2. Credit Only**

October 16 is the last day a student can use the on line registration system, MY PACK, to make any changes to their schedules. They know this. We do advise students to consider taking classes for credit only that are not part of their degree if they are not going to make at least an A or B in them. The rationale behind this is because we cannot see a course having the effect a C- or lower will have on the GPA that does not count in the degree. The majority of these are MA 107, MA 111, ENG 100, and 100-level foreign languages none of which count on Textile degrees. However, PE can be done Credit Only for all degrees at NCSU and is recommended to be taken that way. It's extremely hard to make an A in PE at NCSU.

Another reality that some students may need to do is to change a course to credit only if they know they are hopelessly failing a course by October 16. We ask them to discuss this with me, but they certainly do not always do this. **NOTE:** It is not reasonable for a student who is doing poorly as late as October 16 to think they can "pull the grade up". The mindset of doing this from their high school perspective is just not realistic here. It is far better for a student to drop this course, if they have enough hours to allow this, or change it to credit only to prevent it from causing them to have a low GPA. There is nothing to be gained by making a F in a class. However, having said that in most cases, a D- is acceptable in many classes to count on a student's degree. Sometimes being finished with a course is worth taking the D- and moving on. They know to talk to us about this.

If a student "passes" a credit only course, they receive the hours for the course but their GPA is not affected. If they should not pass the course, then their GPA is still not affected. We have discussed this to the point of exhaustion in T 101.

## **Suspension Policy**

Students are not suspended at the end of the fall semester, no matter what their GPA is, unless their overall GPA is less than a 1.0. If that happens, they are suspended immediately. Again, we've discussed this thoroughly in T 101.

This is an interesting policy that receives mixed reviews all the time. While this is good news in one way, it can also be a serious allowance for some students. Students who return with GPAs below a 2.0 need to seek help from the Counseling Center to assess what they need to do as well as talk to us.



## **Student Who Are Planning to Leave Textiles??**

If your student is definitely leaving the College of Textiles or still undecided, we suspect you are probably well aware of the situation. We have treated this completely openly and extremely supportively in class. Never has anything been said to make these students feel less important or cared for. With that being said, you need to know exactly what we do for students who tell us they want to change colleges.

First, we ask what degree they think they want. We have the access to their records to add that degree to their individual student information on the web. This means they can easily see what classes work in that degree. In addition, we have shown them repeatedly how to access information about all the degrees in all colleges at NCSU.

We have a phenomenal service at NCSU called Advising Central which is part of OASIS, Office of Advising Support, Information and Services. [http://www.ncsu.edu/advising\\_central/](http://www.ncsu.edu/advising_central/) What is it for? This center is completely dedicated to helping students who want to make such changes and to do it successfully.

We will send all the names of students indicating to me they wanted to leave Textiles to this center. To be allowed to register for the spring, these students must make an appointment with an advisor in this center and meet with them. We will not advise these students because there are too many degrees at NCSU with which to keep up. The advisers in OASIS are current on all degrees.

So, we wanted you to know we are proactive in dealing with students in this situation. We will not allow them to become lost and feel uncared for at NCSU to the very best of our ability, but they must do as we ask and be responsible for following up and making appointments to visit OASIS..

